

A Mountain Blows Its Top!

The date was May 18, 1980. The place was Washington State. A tremendous explosion sent echoes through the warm spring air. Then a huge cloud of smoke rose from the peak of a mountain. Mount St. Helens, a sleeping volcano, had finally awakened.

Mount St. Helens had been quiet for over 120 years. Then, in the spring of 1980, it started to smoke. The smoke signaled that pressure was building up inside. Because of this warning, officials closed the roads leading to the volcano. Most people living near the volcano moved away. But over 50 people died in the explosion anyway, and countless plants and animals were killed.

The eruption caused millions of dollars in damage. Heat from the blast melted the snow on top of the mountain. Melting snow caused floods and mudslides. Homes, offices, roads, and bridges were destroyed. The heat also sparked forest fires. When Mount St. Helens exploded, ash rained down. Clouds of ash blocked out the sunlight. Falling ash killed crops. Ash covered everything like a blanket for miles. A once green mountain turned completely gray.

After a disaster, nature always finds a way to restore life. Mount St. Helens was no different. A few days after the big blast, elk and coyotes returned to the mountain. Hummingbirds buzzed around, looking for food. Some fish and frogs had stayed cool as a result of staying under water. Gophers had stayed underground and escaped the heat. After everything quieted down, the gophers became heroes. They helped to heal the mountain. Gophers tunneled through the ash to dig new homes. In doing so, they brought fresh soil to the surface. Windblown seeds landed on the new soil. Soon new plants were growing again. Animals were coming back to eat the plants. Before long Mount St. Helens had made an amazing comeback.

Resource Links RDI Book 1: p. 351

SAM Keyword: Cause

Use with page 296.

Cause and Effect

A **cause** is a reason something happened. It answers the question *Why did this happen?* An **effect** is a result. It answers the question *What happened?* Words like *because of*, *why*, *caused*, *since*, and *as a result* often signal a cause-and-effect relationship.

Use this chart to identify causes and effects.

Passage: _____

Cause	→	Effect
Cause	→	Effect
Cause	→	Effect

Use with pages 296 and 297.

Resource Links

1 RDI Book 1: p. 396

SAM Keyword: Cause

